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THE CHAIRMAN AND HIS DEPARTMENT.

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THREE IMPORTANT OBLIGATIONS OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN ARE TO DEVELOP THE DEPARTMENT'S PROGRAM, TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, AND TO BUILD THE STAFF. THE CHAIRMAN'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM OF HIS DEPARTMENT ARE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE BEGINNING AND ADVANCED COURSES FOR THE ENGLISH AND NON-ENGLISH SPECIALIST, TO RECRUIT UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS, AND TO SPEED UP DEGREE PROGRAMS, ESPECIALLY FOR GRADUATE DEGREES, IN ORDER TO TURN OUT MORE SPECIALISTS AT A FASTER RATE. TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, THE CHAIRMAN SHOULD NOT ONLY PROVIDE SUPERVISED TEACHING FOR DEGREE CANDIDATES BUT ALSO SHOULD VISIT CLASSES TAUGHT BY HIS STAFF AND ENCOURAGE THE STAFF TO TALK ABOUT THEIR TEACHING. TO SECURE AND KEEP A GOOD STAFF, HE SHOULD INVEST FUNDS TO GIVE THE DEPARTMENT DISTINCTION IN TWO OR THREE AREAS, RECRUIT ALERT, IMAGINATIVE PEOPLE POSSESSING A SENSE OF PROFESSIONALISM, AND DO ALL IN HIS POWER TO ENSURE HIGH MORALE. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE ADE BULLETIN," NUMBER 15, OCTOBER 1967, PAGES 3-11. (BN)

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THE CHAIRMAN AND HIS DEPARTMENT

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By others, this meeting will be viewed in a variety of ways. Some will say it is a case of the blind getting together in the hope that when blindness is compounded sufficiently, vision somehow emerges. Others will charge that we are a bevy of escapists trying to deal with our common fantasy. Still others, I am sure, will look upon this conference as an attempt at group therapy by those who are finally willing to admit that they need it. And still others will see it as just another junket with the usual pilfering from the department's expense account.

How we see it I'm not sure. The topic given me was "Why Chairmen Gather for Such a Meeting?" I can answer this quickly: I don't know. I came because I was asked to give this talk. Why you came you'll have to answer for yourselves. I hope it was not simply to trade gripes or frustrations. And if the conference becomes simply a dreary series of testimonials, it will really be of dubious value.

I take it that we are all chairmen because for wild and obscure reasons we want to be chairmen--or at least are willing to be chairmen. And, I take it, since we find ourselves in this position, we want to do as good a job as possible, and find as much satisfaction in the job as possible, and find as much satisfaction in the job as possible. So my real subject is, what are some of the sources of special satisfaction for a chairman of a department of English.

First, though, we might ask ourselves what a chairman is. It is like asking, What hath God wrought? To define a chairman we have to push beyond such popular scurillities as "a mouse bucking to become a rat" to what seem to be the facts in the case. Until at least World War II, most departments of English had heads rather than chairmen. The distinction was one of substance as well as terminology. Typically the head was a minor despot who held himself responsible to the administration for what he did, but not to his colleagues in the department. If he did not actually wear silver eagles on his shoulder, he made it clear by speech and manner that he was the colonel and expected to be obeyed. Collectively the department prospered to the extent that the head had influence with the administration and found satisfaction in being the benignant despot. If the head were interested only in building up himself, there was little to be done unless the individual was willing to truckle. Some developed truckling into a fine art. A compliment nicely placed when others were present helped enormously. So did a gift at Christmas. Best, though, was to name the eldest son after the head--provided one could stomach this evidence of shame throughout life. Of course, there was always the chance that one's wife in a fit of exasperation would tell off the wife of the head. Given such a contretemps, the only recourse was to look for a new job.

The chairman, so called, in those days was literally that, a chairman of the committee of the whole. Actually such a chairman was really the department clerk. Unlike a head, the chairman had substantially little power and would have been deposed had he attempted to usurp any. Scholars scorned the job or, at best, took it for only a year or two, lamenting all the while their self-sacrifice. Somehow the daily chores got done but there was little or no long-range planning. If the institution were Harvard, the department prospered because of the reputation and abilities of the staff; if it were Western State pretending it was Harvard the department turned into an oligarchy or disintegrated into an anarchy of warring cliques.

In the past two decades there has been a clear trend away from the despot on one hand and the glorified clerk on the other. I suspect this change has not been due so much to any basic change in the nature of departments or chairmen as to the change in the nature of institutions of higher education as a whole. For whether we like it or not, our colleges and especially our universities have become big business with all of the characteristics

and appurtenances of big business. The president must first of all be a manager and not an educator. His chief aides are managers in charge of finance, government research, physical plant, and, almost incidentally, the faculty. The machines in our business and registrar offices tell us what forms we may and may not use, how many letters we may have in the title of a course, and when the various deadlines must be. The departmental executive officer, therefore, finds himself caught between this new world of hard-driving management and the old world of administration by personal conversation. The administration insists that he and his department conform to established management routine; his colleagues stridently scoff at such routines and do the best they can to undermine them. The management insists that he be part of the team; his colleagues insist that he not sell out to impersonality. In such a situation the chairman needs the wisdom of Solomon, the humility of Job, the firmness of Moses, and the great good luck of Daniel. More specifically he must be an educational philosopher, presumably a scholar and teacher, an accountant, a real estate operator, a management expert, a typist, a custodian, a receptionist, a psychiatrist, a chauffeur, a lavish entertainer, and a passionate humanist.

Of special significance, however, is the fact that the typical chairman now finds himself expected by the department to be both a leader and a follower. He is expected to allow the department to make the major policy decisions--and even some of the minor ones; yet he is also expected to define objectives, chart directions, suggest guide lines for the operation of the department, and in general lead it to the Promised Land. In short, the typical department is willing to give its chairman great latitude. It does not want a driver, but it does want a leader. The result is that the chairman is in a strategic position to bring to pass changes in staff, program, procedures, and almost all other aspects of a department. Herein lies the challenge of the position, and the possibilities for great personal satisfaction.

So I come to the main burden of this discourse: the activities where satisfaction can be especially found. I should like to discuss three such activities: the development of the department's program, the improvement of teaching, and the building of the staff.

As the man primarily responsible for the academic program of his department, the chairman plays a crucial role as a leader of American education. Oddly, this is the role that seems least talked about at most meetings of chairmen. Who else in the university or college is in so influential a position with respect to the English program? Not the president, certainly, who is concerned with fund raising, formal ceremonies, the building program, and parking rates. Not the dean, who is buried beneath forms and budgets. Not the typical professor who is more concerned with his book on non-heroes in Arthurian romance than the nature of the English curriculum as a whole. Only the chairman is in a position to view the English curriculum as a whole and in detail, and to bring about influential changes. The question he must face up to constantly is "What are the immediate educational obligations of my department?"

It is helpful, it seems to me, for the chairman to reflect on immediate obligations rather than long-range goals or ultimate ideals because the latter immediately send one into the wild blue yonder filled with rose-tinted clouds of platitude. Any one of us in the next ten minutes can list long-range goals for any department of English: to provide a liberal education, to create the good life, to inculcate tolerance and compassion, to humanize the barbarians, and so on. I of course hope that we can and are accomplishing all of these. But they are too vague and elusive to build a program on. So let us assume that our hearts are high and go on to less titillating things that we shall call immediate obligations--obligations to the students, to the profession, and to society as a whole.

First of all is the obligation of the department to the students, both the English specialist and the the non-specialist. Our obligation to the English specialist, I take it, is to give him some understanding and appreciation of his language and its literature, to enable him to write with some clarity and grace, and to prepare him, in most cases, to teach in the field. I doubt that I would get much argument on such a statement. Yet there have been astonishingly few departments that have bothered to build their academic program with these

obligations in mind. Leafing through college catalogs, as I did recently, one discovers for example that most undergraduate programs look like miniature Ph.D. programs of the 1920's and 1930's with their emphasis upon English literary history and old-line philology. In many programs there is no work required of the English major in advanced composition, in the nature of modern English, in critical approaches, or in rhetoric. At the master's level the great emphasis again is on literary history, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of work in formal criticism, language and advanced writing. The doctoral program, which now is under close scrutiny thanks to John Fisher and the MLA, has traditionally consisted of work in the various historical fields with a bow toward language in the shape of Old and Middle English. In many departments this strait-jacket of literary history is beginning to break open, but the fact remains that taking them as a whole, the undergrauate and graduate English curricula are anachronisms. They take little account of the comprehensive nature of our discipline or the pressing needs of our students. Herein lies one of the great opportunities for the chairman.

The program for non-specialists offers another opportunity. Freshman and sophomore service courses have been our heaviest cross. In fretful desperation many departments are trying to reduce their importance or eliminate them altogether. Yet there remains the nagging question of our obligations to the non-specialist. It is this obligation that is so frequently forgotten in staff discussions on freshman English. In one institution that I know of the department recently voted to eliminate the freshman course without any assessment of the needs of the students and without any consultation with other departments. This seems like irresponsibility. It could be that the students in this particular school--a four-year liberal arts college--might be enormously helped by a course in language and rhetoric if the present course in composition seems unnecessary. At least the chairman should have required a careful study of the situation before action was taken.

Another obligation of a department to the non-specialist it seems to me, is to provide a junior and senior courses of general interest: courses in the novel, in drama, in folklore, in humor and satire, in the history of the language, and the like. My recent scanning of catalogs convinced me that most departments feel they have met their obligations to the student body as a whole by teaching the required freshman and sophomore courses. Not at all. If we really believe in the power of literature to move and enrich the human spirit, we should be making it available to as many students in the college or university as possible. The chairman who tolerates a schedule of courses for specialists only would seem to be unhappily myopic.

If we update our academic program wisely we shall be meeting not only our obligations to our own students but, in part, to the profession as well. Our obligation to the profession requires us to expand and speed up our programs, keeping their quality as high as possible. As you well know the need for English teachers is enormous. This year over 40 million students are taking English in some form or other. Only about ten per cent of the elementary teachers teaching these students have had majors in English, only about 50% of the high school teachers. Many of our four-year colleges and most of our junior colleges cannot find even M.A.'s in English to meet their classes. And of those entering college teaching in the past year for the first time, fewer than 10% had Ph.D.'s. The individual department, therefore, has a pressing obligation to the profession to turn out more specialists and turn them out more quickly.

We should be actively recruiting undergraduate majors in English. The old pose of aloofness is ridiculous these days when the profession's need is so great and when science regularly skims off the majority of the best students. When I was an instructor I was told by a chairman that the glories of English literature speak so eloquently for themselves that it would be excessively bad manners on my part to try to persuade an undergraduate to choose English as his vocation. If they need urging, he sniffed, we do not want them. And not more than three months ago I heard a senior professor argue similarly in saying that it would be undignified for us to attempt to lure students into English. Now who's kidding whom? We need to interest as many of the best undergraduates as we can in our field if we are to meet our fundamental obligations. I am not suggesting that we employ Batton,

Barton, Durstine and Osborn to mount an advertising campaign, but I am suggesting that we talk to our best undergraduates about the possibilities now open to a man with a major in English or with an advanced degree in English.

In addition to active recruiting we need to speed up our programs, especially those leading to graduate degrees. Recent meetings sponsored by the MLA for department chairmen show that the great majority favor a Ph.D. program that can be accomplished by a full-time student in four years. Whether we can translate our vote in these meetings into tangible programs back home is still a question. For the sake of the profession as well as the students, however, the chairman who does not encourage a reassessment of his department's Ph.D. program in the coming year will be especially derelict. Probably just as pressing is the need for a reassessment of the M.A. program. For many departments it would be a great convenience simply to abolish the master's program and to concentrate on the future doctors. Some departments have already done this. Yet most of us--certainly those of us teaching in state schools--cannot afford to be so cavalier. Somebody has to train M.A.'s in English for the high schools, and it should be the prestigious universities as well as the newer and smaller institutions. What is more, we shall not be serving the profession really well until we develop programs of special value to those who wish to teach English in the junior colleges.

If a department is meeting its obligations to the students and to the profession, it will simultaneously be meeting the major part of its obligation to society. Yet there are obligations here that the chairman must take into account as he considers his academic program. In a world in which the typical citizen has more and more leisure, ways must be found to help him use it as fruitfully and as happily as possible. Certainly not all of our countrymen want to fill all of their leisure hours with speedboats, Wagon-train, and Schlitz. The evening course or the extension course in English can help meet intellectual and aesthetic desires of many in a way that is uniquely valuable. So can extension courses in communities away from the main campus.

What I have been saying, of course, is that the academic program of any department is not simply a matter of deciding from year to year what courses to add or what courses to drop. It is a matter of studying possible obligations of the department for everyone from the freshman to the senior citizen of the community. In the wise fashioning of the academic program to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of American society, in short, a chairman can play a crucial role in American education.

The success of a department's program, however, even that of the most brilliantly devised, depends upon the quality of the teaching. Thus we come to a second area which seems to me to offer all of us a great challenge and the possibility of considerable satisfaction.

Just about everyone in the profession gives lip service to good teaching. We all frequently say that excellence in education depends upon the man behind the desk. Yet again with that curious perversity of ours we have insisted on doing nothing to see to it that the man behind the desk is able to handle himself as well as possible when he gets behind that desk. It would be interesting to know, for example, how many departments represented in this room have set aside time in the last two years for a discussion of problems relating to teaching. If yours is a typical department, teaching is a taboo subject--something presumably like sodomy. Over 85% of our M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s leave our hallowed halls to teach, and well over 50% of our A.B.'s. We have deliberately refused to give them such help as we can. You know the pat excuses. Let me cite the most common. No. 1 is that teachers are born, not made. This is one of those convenient half-truths. It is true to the extent that we obviously cannot change a man's personality, make him charming if he is basically sour. But even the most happily endowed can improve themselves in the art of teaching, just as the so-called born musician improves under careful supervision. The No. 2 excuse is that students learn all they need to know about teaching by watching us. This is an extraordinary pomposity that many will repeat without the saving glimmer of a smile. Students do learn by example, but it is undiscriminated learning. In fact one in a cynical moment might say that the whole difficulty is that students do learn by imitating us. When I started to teach I was required

along with the other beginners to sit in a freshman class of the department head and observe how he did it. He was an eminently successful teacher. But he was also an eccentric bachelor who had all kinds of classroom quirks that somehow enhanced his effectiveness--but destroyed ours. For example, he used to wake up a dozing student by lobbing a piece of chalk off his head or shoulders. It was great fun and invariably brought the whole class to attention. The first time I tried the trick in a class of engineers--I was only twenty-two--the student woke up furious and asked me what the hell I thought I was doing.

The No. 3 excuse is that no one knows what good teaching is anyway, and therefore why worry about it. This is sheer irresponsibility. To be sure, the teaching evaluation sheets so dear to the hearts of deans seem like inadequate things, and we can all cite good teachers that seem to break every basic principle of the art. Nevertheless, we <u>can</u> isolate certain aspects that are helpful to teachers on matters of organization and strategy, speech and movement, critical approaches, and centrality of purpose. One young teacher I know, a reasonably bright one too, was helped enormously when it was pointed out to him that he had dropped into a monotonous pattern of presenting each literary work first through biography and then through close analysis which consisted exclusively of a discussion of point of view and symbol.

The case seems to be clear that one of our great responsibilities as department chairman is to see to it that good teaching becomes a major concern of the department. There are some departments yet, I suppose, in which the mention of teaching will lead to an instant request for the chairman's resignation. In others, however, and the number of these is growing fast, the subject will be more readily received than we may suspect. Concern with good teaching must start with a concern for the teaching of the regular staff. Here, of course, the easiest place to start is with the instructors and assistant professors. They are hardly in a position to demur--openly at least--if the chairman asks to visit their classes or asks them to get together occasionally to talk about their teaching. One can then sneak up on the associate and full professors by asking them to invite the junior staff members to their classes occasionally and afterwards discuss their classroom strategies with them. It need not be too long, therefore, before there can be departmental discussions of teaching.

None of this will amount to much, though, unless we actually take teaching into account in assigning research leaves and in determining raises and promotions. To be sure, excellence in teaching is a lot harder to determine than excellence in publication, but in one fashion or another we all do learn who are the best teachers on our staffs. They should be rewarded accordingly. One of the most salutary things that ever happened to a staff that I heard about was when one of the younger men, whose publication was passable, was dropped because his teaching was ineffective. The following year--like Avis--all the others tried harder--and found they could do better.

None of this implies a denigration of research and publication. Normally in my experience the active scholar is also themost provocative teacher. We all know of some grand old scholar who was an unmitigated bore in the classroom. But I wonder if such scholars don't stand out because they are the exception rather than the rule. I feel confident that this is the case on my own staff. Furthermore I notice that when men come back from research leaves there is a new vitality in their teaching as well as a new manuscript to send off to a university press. In many ways, what we are fighting here is the false notion that research and teaching are somehow antithetical, and if one supports good teaching he is somehow against scholarship. It is the same kind of thinking that leads to the notion that you can't be a good American and support Medicare.

A concern with good teaching should properly start with regular staff, but it should extend to the training of all those of our students seeking degrees, regardless of the level. Those who plan to teach in elementary and secondary schools should have training in all three components of our discipline: language, composition, and literature. Supervised teaching for these students we can leave to the specialists in English education, but we are responsible for their range of knowledge. Indispensable, it seems to me, is training

in advanced composition and rhetoric, modern grammar and the history of the language, critical approaches, and representative works of English and American literature.

At the Ph.D. level our obligations are more complicated. At this level we cannot turn over teacher training to those in English education. Nor, I suspect, would we want to. Again we need to see that they get a full compliment of work, embracing not only literary history but literary criticism, and linguistics--or, if you find that too portentous a word--knowledge of the nature of language in general and of modern English in particular. In addition, as a forthcoming report of the MLA will suggest, a Ph.D. candidate should do a limited amount of supervised teaching as part of his Ph.D. program. By "limited amount" the committee sponsoring the report means no more than one class per term for two years of the program. It adds that the teaching should be supervised and should include both composition and literature. Moreover, departments should consider the teaching as an element in the student's education and not as a means of staffing courses. Serious thought should be given to granting graduate credit for such work, as well as the all too modest stipend.

Some departments are adding courses in the teaching of college composition and the teaching of literature in college. Far from old-line superficial "methods" courses, these go into considerable depth on the nature of the two disciplines and the strategies possible in their classroom exploration. At Iowa we have had several students tell us that they learned more about the basic natures of both composition and literature in these courses than they did in any of their other courses.

In brief, since we're in the business of training teachers as well as scholars, it would seem logical for us to get about the job of training teachers as well as scholars. And no one is going to start all this unless we chairmen do. We'll be accused by some, of course, of selling out to Education with a capital E, but if we're going to worry about such accusations, we ought to go back to our library carels and let tougher-skinned persons take over our desks. To a very great extent indeed the quality of teaching in American schools and colleges is dependent upon us, and given the enormous need for effective teaching in the humanistic subjects, it is a responsibility we hardly dare push aside.

If good teaching is necessary for a lively and useful program, good teachers are necessary for good teaching. This brings us to the subject of staffing, which may be our greatest possibility for satisfaction in the job. There are two obvious aspects to this problem: obtaining a competent staff, and keeping it once it is obtained. This evening I shall speak in fairly general terms about these problems since I notice that you will be discussing them in some detail later in the conference.

Putting together a good staff is partly a matter of good management, partly a matter of luck. But no one can leave it to catch-as-catch-can methods. Even if one has to deviate from them because of circumstances, there should be a few governing principles for the building of a department. Take, for example, the question of balance. Should the chairman try to build all areas in his department to roughly comparable strength or should he concentrate on certain areas to the detriment of others? The question is a crucial one unless one is the chairman at Yale and can make all areas outstanding. My own feeling is that the chairman who opts for areas of comparable strength is dooming his department to mediocrity. A wiser policy, it seems to me, is for the chairman to invest his limited funds in an attempt to give the department distinction in two or three areas so that he can, at least in those areas, attract fine students and distinguished scholars. Naturally, if he decides to build up the American and contemporary fields, there will be strong words from the medievalists and renaissance specialists. But there are always strong words from someone anyway, and in the end most medievalists and renaissance specialists would rather be in a department that has some measure of distinction than in one on a dead level of ordinariness.

In addition to a few governing principles to guide him in building his department, a chairman needs to be fairly clear in his own mind about the criteria to be employed in selecting staff, especially the junior staff. There are the obvious criteria: age of

the man, his training, his publications, his reputation as a teacher, his personality, and the particular needs of the department of the moment. There are hidden criteria, too, that operate sometimes more strongly than any of us would like to believe: the man's dress, his family, whether or not he will take a drink, whether or not his wife is good looking, whether or not he is likely to become a personality problem. I know one assistant professor who was turned down by chairmen because he committed the unpardonable sin of wearing brown shoes with a blue suit, and another who became talkative after the second highball--though the chairman himself has never been able to take one highball without becoming a crashing bore.

Especially in selecting younger men, it seems to me that there are two criteria that are more important than any that I have just mentioned. First is the quality of a man's mind and his imagination. If he has an alert mind and a lively imagination, all kinds of happy things will result. He has what is necessary for good teaching and distinctive publication; he will attract other good young men; he will be valuable on committees and in discussions of program; and he will be a welcome addition to any academic community. At least at the assistant professor level we have felt ourselves far more fortunate in adding, say, a brilliant medievalist than an average Americanist, though the more compelling need may have been in American literature.

The second overriding consideration, it seems to me, is the man's sense of professionalism. This should become evident in his own research and publication plans, his interest in good teaching, his eagerness to be a part of one or more professional organizations, his concern for the profession as a whole and its basic problems. I do not at all lament the fact that many of the younger men now have a wholly different hierarchy of loyalties from the one that some of us had several decades ago. The first loyalty of these younger men is to the profession, secondly to the department, and only thirdly to the institution. While this hierarchy results in their being more mobile and more demanding, it also results in a seriousness of purpose. They want to be known by others in the profession as able young scholars and not simply to become quaint and lovable characters who will be quoted in the senior annual. The young pros are a joy to work with, and I'd trade two dilletantes and a second baseman for one of them.

But suppose now that we have a staff of some distinction, how do we hold on to it? It's not a matter of keeping raiders away from our doors. Outside attempts to raid a staff are in many ways the highest compliment that a chairman can receive. And given the present situation, every chairman is going to lose men from time to time. The problem is to keep the majority of the best ones.

There are obvious aids, starting with--what else?--high salaries. A reasonable teaching load, a generous leave system, adequate secretarial help, attractive and comfortable offices, lounges--these have become indispensable. It is helpful, too, to get the man well housed and his children in the best schools. And, if we want to be completely Machiavellian about it, useful to see to it that he buys a house with a heavy mortgage and little likelihood in the near future of his being able to get his money out of it!

More than anything else, though, the morale of the staff will hold a man to it. This is something, as I need not tell you, that is hard to come by. Many of the causes are beyond our control: the actions and attitudes of the regents or trustees, the allocations by the state legislature if it is a state school, the actions and attitudes of the central administration and of the dean of the college, the salary schedule, and the policy on leaves. But there are many factors leading to high morale over which we <u>do</u> have control. One is a sense of direction. What are the plans for the department for the next five years? Another is a sense of movement. Is the department taking actions that will lead it toward its announced goals? Is it clearly trying to update its programs, or is it still imitating Harvard of the 1890's? For high morale, too, the department needs the sense of security that comes from firm and recognized and acceptable operations. Are there clear guidelines for the organization and operation of the department? An elaborate and peremptory departmental constitution can be as repressive as it is helpful, but guidelines having the force

of common law can be immensely valuable both to the chairman and to all the other members of the department. Direction, movement, guidelines for operation, these can lead to high morale and they are elements over which a chairman does have a high measure of control and responsiblity.

But of all the elements leading to high morale, person to person relationship between the chairman and the individual member of the department is most important. Here because of the press of affairs and the weight of numbers, we often fail. It is not that we do not like that bearded assistant professor with his passion for reform; it is simply that we seem not to be able to find a time to talk with him. As a result he begins to feel unloved and unwanted and takes the next position that opens. Here I freely hand out advice that for a variety of reasons I too seldom take myself. But I do believe that the chairman who is to succeed must be prepared to give a very high portion of his time to talking with his staff when they want to talk or when he feels they should talk.

Of course something more than time is necessary. A chairman has to be reasonably shrewd in handling people and knowing how to talk with each. One can say things to a male assistant professor that would turn a lady professor purple with rage. In reading Eric Berne's Games People Play recently, it occurred to me that some of the consulting room games he lists are precisely the ones that we play in talking with members of our staff. I am assuming that I can omit rapo first degree, second degree, and third degree. But how about the game of Peasant or "Gee, you're wonderful, Mr. Murgatroyd"? This is the staff member who tries flattery to gain his own ends or her own ends. Sometimes, especially when a staff member is a relatively young woman, she actually thinks the chairman is wonderful and is playing the role of "little old me" who is the wondering and awestruck disciple. The solution in either case is painful. Either the chairman has to go along with the game knowing full well that ultimately he will be caught up as a fraud, or he has to stop the game immediately and make it clear that he's not so wonderful, indeed that he's just a peasant too. The result inevitably is that the staff member becomes a bit bewildered and even resentful. A staff member who plays "Gee, you're wonderful, Mr. Murgatroyd" for his own ends, though not believing a word of it, is somewhat easier to handle. Usually some very forthright insult like "Can it, Murphy, what is it you want?" will clear the air and establish a fine feeling of rapport.

A real toughie is the person who comes in to say "There's nothing you can do to help me." More literally he starts out by saying "I know there is nothing you can tell me about next year's salary, but we've been looking at this house, and the bank wants to know how much of a down payment we can afford to make." Nothing that the chairman can say will be right. If he agrees that he has no information about the salary, he's being just as useless as the faculty expected him to be. If he has the information and gives it, he makes it clear that he's been holding out on the staff. Obviously the only thing is to blame the dean for the whole situation.

By all odds, though, the worst man to handle is the one who comes in to play "Now I've got you, you son of a bitch." He is far more interested in the fact that he has the chairman at his mercy than he is in getting anything from the chairman. I had this played on me two or three years ago when an assistant professor allowed as how he was underpaid as assistant professors went. I took a hasty look at the budget and told him he had the second-highest salary among the assistant professors. When he sat back looking like a cat that had swallowed two canaries I knew something had miscarried. "You mean," he asked, "that I am making more than W and X and Y and Z?" Too late I remembered that some of the assistant professors were scattered in the budget among the associate professors and that I had not checked their salaries. There were no two ways about it: he had me. Some days the chairman should just stay in bed. Dr. Berne suggests that the only procedure in such an instance is "to yield gracefully without dispute." He adds, and quite properly, that the wife of an NIGYSOB player should be treated with polite correctness and even the mildest flirtations, gallantries or slights should be avoided.

You know the other most common types: the older scholar who thinks all administrators are

morons; the bushy-haired reformer who becomes furious if a chairman doen't sign his weekly petition; the frustrated entrepreneur who wants an outer office, a secretary, and an intercom system; the grant collector who feels that he is doing the chairman a personal favor if he teaches a class now and then; the medievalist who automatically votes against anything that will benefit those in American or contemporary literature; the parliamentarian who is forever calling for a point of order and requiring the chairman to report on the activities of the past month; the associate professor who keeps the conversation on sports and poker in order to keep it off the research he is not doing; the poet who thinks that scholars are all out to get him; the lady professor who never opens her mouth during a staff meeting and then afterwards complains bitterly about everything that has taken place; finally and ever and always, the alcoholic. If these and others that you can name can be kept reasonably happy and working together, the chairman can count himself as one of the blessed, and can feel at the end of the day that God indeed is good.

Can the chairman afford the luxury of playing games with any of these types? Unhappily not, unless they are such good games as "Happy to Help" or Homely Sage" or"They'll Be Glad They Knew Me." As for the nastier games, he will simply have to learn how to counter them without giving any evidence he knows they are being played. Or, if he is experimentally minded, he can always try them out on the Dean.

Thus I come to the end of my remarks. In conclusion I would say only this. There is much to this job of being chairman that is sheer annoyance: filling out forms, signing slips, answering correspondence, busywork of infinite variety. Yet there are compensations that one senses only after he has taken the position. For me they can be found especially in developing the program, in encouraging good teaching, and in working individually with the staff. Wherever they are found, however, there <u>are</u> substantial satisfactions awaiting the conscientious chairman of a department of English. Whether they are greater than those of writing that book that now will never get written I am not prepared to say. But at least they are great enough to keep the days interesting and, I would like to think, the number of friends increasing.

Professor Gerber remains Head of the Department of English while assuming the additional responsibilities of Director of the School of Letters at the University of Iowa. The new school will be made up of the departments of English, classics, French and Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, German. Chinese and Oriental studies, programs in American civilization, comparative literature, creative writing, European literature and thought, linguistics, language translation, and the centers for modern letters, textual studies, international writing, and research.